

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 9 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as currently pending in the application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image display method for displaying a plurality of images in one of image layout formats of a plurality of types, comprising:
 - a frequency storage step of storing, for a medical examination, frequency of use for each of the image layout formats used in the medical examination, wherein each of the image layout formats includes a plurality of image display positions[[,]] and ~~each types~~ of the image layout formats ~~depends on the type of image displayed at each position of~~ medical images to be displayed at the plurality of image display positions;
 - a first setting step of setting a type of medical examination;
 - a second setting step of setting one of the image layout formats based upon [[the]] frequencies of use corresponding to a medical examination having a type set in the first setting step, that have been stored; and
 - a display step of displaying each image ~~at corresponding positions, which are defined by each type of the images, of the plurality of image display positions of~~ medical image whose type is included in the image layout format set in the second setting step, at each image display position included in the image layout format set in the second setting step on a display.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said frequency storage step stores the frequency of use in association with each of a plurality of observers, and said second setting step sets the one of the image layout formats based upon the frequencies of use and an observer.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said second setting step sets, for every observer, an image layout format having the highest frequency of use as an image layout format used to display the plurality of images.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the frequency of use of an image layout format is updated at a timing at which the plurality of images is displayed in the image layout format.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the frequency of use of an image layout format is updated at a timing at which the image layout format is changed.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the frequency of use of an image layout format, which is used in displaying the plurality of images, is updated at a timing at which said display step ends.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the frequency of use of an image layout format, which is used in displaying the plurality of

images, is updated at a timing at which an observer performs an operation for updating the frequency of use.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said frequency storage step stores collectively the frequencies of use of the image layout formats, which have been used for displaying the plurality of images for a plurality of observers, without distinguishing among the plurality of observers.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of images are medical images and a combination of images of a plurality of different types of examination, and said second setting step sets an image layout format based upon the frequency of use corresponding to a type of examination of the plurality of images.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a ~~number~~ maximum value setting step of setting a maximum value of the ~~number~~ ranks of frequencies of use capable of being stored; and

an exclusion step of excluding the image layout format having the lowest frequency of use when the total number of frequencies of use exceeds the ~~number~~

maximum value set in the ~~number~~ maximum value setting step by adding a frequency of use of a new image layout format.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein when the ~~number~~ maximum value is set to one, the ranks of the frequency of all image layout formats are treated as equal.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a layout format display step of displaying a display of image layout formats for notifying of the one of the image layout formats that has currently been set.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 13, further comprising an image layout format change step of changing the image layout format of the images currently being displayed on the display.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the display of image layout formats is changed in response to an operation for changing the image layout format.

16. (Currently Amended) An image display apparatus comprising:
a display for displaying images;
a layout storage unit for storing a plurality of image layout formats used in a medical examination, wherein each of the plurality of image layout formats includes a

plurality of image display positions and types of medical images to be displayed at the plurality of image display positions;

a medical examination setting unit for setting a type of medical examination;

a layout setting unit for setting one of the plurality of image layout formats on said display;

a display control unit for controlling to display on the display each medical image whose type is included in ~~at corresponding positions, which are defined by each type of the images, of the plurality of image display positions of the image layout format set by said layout setting unit,~~ at each image display position included in the image layout format set by the layout setting unit; and

a frequency storage unit for storing, for the medical examination, frequency of use for ~~[[the]] each of the plurality of image layout formats, wherein each of the image layout formats depends on the type of image displayed at each position of the plurality of image display positions;~~

wherein said layout setting unit sets an image layout format based upon ~~[[the]] frequencies of use~~ corresponding to a medical examination having a type set by the medical examination setting unit.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable program stored on a computer-readable medium having program code for causing a computer to execute an image display method for displaying a plurality of images in one of image layout formats of a plurality of types, said program comprising:

code for implementing a frequency storage step of storing, for a medical examination, frequency of use for each of the image layout formats used in the medical examination, wherein each of the image layout formats includes a plurality of image display positions[[,]] and ~~each types of medical images to be displayed at the image layout formats depends on the type of image displayed at each position of the plurality of image display positions;~~

code for implementing a first setting step of setting a type of medical examination;

code for implementing a second setting step of setting one of the image layout formats based upon [[the]] frequencies of use corresponding to a medical examination having a type set in the first setting step, that have been stored; and

code for implementing a display step of displaying each medical image whose type is included in ~~at corresponding positions, which are defined by each type of the images, of the plurality of image display positions of the image layout format set in the~~ second setting step, at each image display position included in the image layout format set in the second setting step on a display.

18. (Cancelled).

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said layout setting unit further sets a plurality of buttons, each indicating one of the plurality of image layout formats, on said display.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising a selection unit for selecting one of the plurality of buttons, wherein the image layout format used to display the images is changed in response to the selection by said selection unit.